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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 03409

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 003409

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/27/2014
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [KMPI](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL MEETING WITH UAE FOREIGN
MINISTER

Classified by Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons: 1.4
(B), (D).

SUMMARY

11. (C) Making her initial call on UAE Foreign Minister Rashed Abdullah al Noaimi September 27, the Ambassador and the FM reviewed our robust bilateral cooperation agenda and discussed cooperation under BMENA and MEPI. The Minister expressed his desire to cooperate with the U.S. and benefit from these regional efforts. However, he cautioned that instability in Palestine and Iraq could limit the success of reform efforts and urged continued U.S. engagement. The Minister, who had just returned from New York, praised active and effective engagement by the U.S. at UNGA. End Summary

ROBUST BILATERAL COOPERATION

12. (C) FM Rashed Abdullah underscored the UAE's long-standing desire to boost economic and security cooperation with the U.S., which he described as critical. Both he and MFA U/S Abdullah Rashed noted that they had just reviewed the latest revision of our Strategic Partnership agenda and commented on our robust cooperation. The Ambassador stated that this cooperation was reflected in the number and quality of our visits and exchanges, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, counter terrorism and security. She noted the utility of the agenda as a work plan for our bilateral cooperation, adding that she had asked the embassy staff to add a section documenting our long-standing scientific and technical cooperation. The Under Secretary also viewed the agenda as a work plan and proposed that we review it on a quarterly basis to document progress and map out future efforts.

UNGA

¶3. (C) The Minister expressed appreciation for his meetings with the Secretary (together with other GCC FMs) in New York and commented positively on the strong engagement by the President and the U.S. delegation at this year,s UNGA.

BMENA

¶4. (C) Rashed Abdullah stated that the UAE wants to work with the U.S. on reform and expressed appreciation for our assistance and the Ambassador's news of the establishment of the regional MEPI office at Embassy Abu Dhabi. The Minister said he was confident that that the UAE would benefit from this coordination, particularly in the areas of social and economic development and women,s issues. Commenting that UAE society differed from those of the other Gulf countries -- citing in particular the large foreign worker population -- he praised the basic premise of BMENA and MEPI that reform must spring from each country. The FM observed that most countries in the region had overcome their initial confusion or hesitancy about BMENA and are now looking at how they can cooperate and benefit from it. The Ambassador stated that the UAE had much to offer others in the region, such as the UAE's experience in entrepreneurial skills training, job creation and women,s education. She reviewed for the Minister some ongoing MEPI programs in the areas of journalist training and education.

BUT REFORM IMPACT LIMITED WITHOUT REGIONAL STABILITY

¶5. (C) The FM stated that the success of BMENA and reform efforts would ultimately be limited if there were no resolution to the Arab Israeli conflict and Iraq remained unstable. He urged the U.S. to maintain its focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which he repeatedly referred to as a "human issue." The Minister commented that despair was pushing many Palestinians and Iraqis to resort to terrorism because they viewed their predicaments as hopeless.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Shaikh Hamdan bin Zayed al Nahayan remains our key bilateral point of contact. Nevertheless, Foreign Minister Rashed Abdullah can be a useful interlocutor. As the MFA's senior diplomat, he has served as Minister since 1980 (de facto from 1980 to 1990, when he was officially named Minister.) While playing little role in day-to-day policy making, he represents the UAE at UNGA and in other international fora, such as the Arab League and NAM. Although critical of U.S. policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Minister, in general, favorably views the U.S. as an indispensable ally.
SISON